

CIA OPERATIONS CENTER

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(CIA SPIES)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER SAID TODAY A PLANNED CUT OF 800 OPERATIVES FROM THE AGENCY'S CLANDESTINE SERVICES IS DESIGNED TO BUILD A "LEARN AND MEAN" OVERSEAS TEAM.

TURNER EARLIER THIS WEEK TOLD CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL OF THE PLANNED CUTS OVER THE NEXT 26 MONTHS IN THE DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS, WHICH CARRIES OUT COVERT AND CLANDESTINE INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS OVERSEAS.

"WHAT WE ARE CUTTING BACK ON IS EXCESSIVE OVERHEAD THAT HAS ACCUMULATED OVER THE YEARS," TURNER SAID TODAY. "...THERE WAS A BIG REDUCTION IN THE CIA AFTER OUR WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM AND WE JUST DIDN'T CUT BACK FAR ENOUGH. AND WE GOT MORE FAT, GOT MORE OVERHEAD THAN WE CAN AFFORD."

TURNER WAS INTERVIEWED ON THE NBC TODAY PROGRAM.

HE SAID HE WANTS TO BE SURE "THAT EVERY EMPLOYEE OUT THERE IS FULLY CHALLENGED AND HAS A REALLY DEMANDING JOB AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE GETTING DOWN TO LEARN AND MEAN."

THE NUMBER OF COVERT AND CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS HAS "REDUCED VERY REMARKABLY" OVER THE PAST DOZEN YEARS, TURNER SAID, BUT THE AGENCY MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO CARRY THEM OUT.

"MY FEELING IS THAT IF THERE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE THAT WE WOULD USE COVERT ACTION. WE MUST MAINTAIN THAT CAPABILITY FOR THE KIND OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY ARISE," HE SAID.

THE OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE - ONE OF FOUR DIVISIONS IN THE CIA - HAS BEEN THE LARGEST AND MOST EXPENSIVE OF ALL BRANCHES. ITS PEAK STRENGTH HAS BEEN ESTIMATED AT OVER 6,000 OPERATIVES AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL.

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